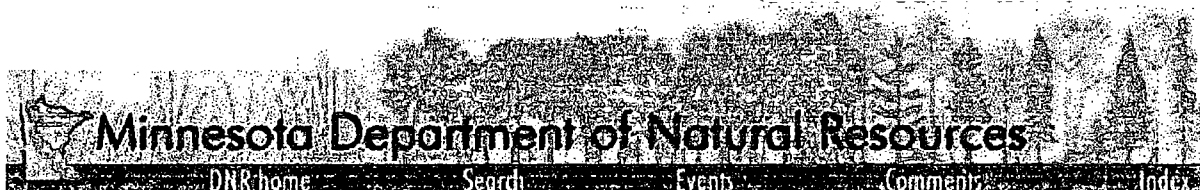


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ORIGINAL



## Guide to Goose Problems



**Most people enjoy seeing Canada geese.** However, the big birds often wear out their welcome when they become too numerous and when yards, beaches and docks become fouled with their feces. This guide explains why problems with geese arise and how homeowners can reduce these problems.

### WHY ARE THERE SO MANY GEESE?

Canada goose populations have dramatically increased in residential and lake home areas because:

- habitat is abundant;
- geese have a high reproductive potential and a long life span;
- mortality from hunting and other predation is low.

Geese live in a particular area that meets their needs for food, reproduction and security. Together these factors provide goose habitat. Geese are grazers that feed primarily on short grasses such as those found in parks, lawns and golf courses. They need feeding sites with open vistas and access to lakes and marshes to escape danger. Golf courses, parks and large lawns next to ponds, marshes and lakes often provide all of these ingredients. Docks, yards and beaches provide secure "loafing" sites for preening and sunning.

Canada geese are extremely prolific. Able to reproduce at 2 or 3 years of age and living to over 10 years, a pair of adult geese raises an average of about 4 young per year. At normal reproduction and mortality, a pond or lake with 3 pairs of adult geese can multiply to nearly 50 birds within 5 years and to over 300 in just 10 years. Being social birds geese congregate in "flocks," except during the nesting season. Most birds in these flocks are related and return to the same nesting and feeding areas every year. Currently, about 25,000 geese spend the summer in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Without hunting seasons and efforts to trap and remove geese, the goose population would likely number 100,000 or more. Without these constraints on the population, the habitat in the seven-county metro area could support an estimated 250,000 geese.

### HOW CAN I GET THE GEESE TO LEAVE?

Hazing

Bird Scare Tape

Energized Fencing

Barrier Fencing

Landscaping

**Especially for Growers****POPULATION MANAGEMENT**

The main drawback of avoidance methods is that they merely cause geese to move to another property. Increasing goose populations will eventually create a larger "demand" for habitat. This demand, often called "pressure," causes geese to become increasingly resistant to avoidance techniques.

*This is not  
an option!* →

Hunting is the most effective way to control goose populations. Special hunting seasons that target local geese have been established by the DNR. Early seasons are limited to field or upland hunting to prevent conflicts with other recreational uses of lakes. However, at the request of local government, individual lakes and wetlands may be opened.

Controlled hunting can be successful in populated areas. Local governments are encouraged to keep goose hunting open where possible. Citizens concerned with growing goose populations are encouraged to support local government efforts to limit restrictions on hunting where possible. The DNR will provide technical assistance in starting and managing hunts. For more information, contact your local **DNR Area Wildlife Office**.

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500 Lafayette Road  
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## Guide to Goose Problems

### HAZING

**The simplest method involves frightening or hazing geese.** In some cases, repeatedly and vigorously chasing geese from the property while armed with a broom will cause the geese to relocate.

Noise-making scare devices are a type of pyrotechnics and can sometimes be used to haze geese from your property. Pyrotechnics are most applicable in rural settings. These include "bangers" and "screamers" fired from a special launcher or "cracker shells" discharged from a 12-gauge shotgun. These devices are often offensive to neighbors. Check local ordinances before purchasing or using pyrotechnic devices. Use pyrotechnics consistent with manufacturers instructions and safety precautions. These products are available from:

Margo Supplies, Ltd. 403-285-9731

Stoneco, Inc. 800-833-2264

Reed-Joseph International 800-647-5554

Sutton Ag Enterprises, Inc. 408-422-9693

*I think you'll  
like this idea.*

Some golf courses have had success hazing geese using highly trained border collies with skilled handlers to repeatedly chase geese from fairways and greens, forcing the birds to relocate. At homes, confined or chained dogs are not effective deterrents since geese quickly learn that the threat is limited. Free running dogs are not popular with neighbors and not allowed in most residential communities. However, dogs confined to the problem area by an electronic "invisible fence" may be useful in some situations. Careful selection and training of a dog motivated to chase geese is necessary to ensure success. "Invisible" dog fences are available from:

Invisible Fencing Pet Containment 800-824-3647

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## Guide to Goose Problems

### **BIRD SCARE TAPE**

**Bird scare tape or bird flash tape is a short-term or emergency strategy** to reduce problems from geese walking onto your yard. Bird scare tape is most effective with small numbers of geese that have other mowed grass areas they can move to. Bird scare tape is not effective if geese are flying into your yard.

Bird scare tape is thin shiny ribbon of mylar about ½ inch wide. It is silver on one side and colored, usually red, on the other. When properly used, the tape flashes in the sun and rattles in the breeze. The flashing and rattling frightens geese.

Inspect and repair the tape daily. Pets, people, wind, and animals can break the tape. A broken bird scare tape "fence" is not effective. Locate the tape where it is visible to the geese. The fence should be long enough so geese cannot walk around it into the yard.

Bird scare tape is available from:

Twin Cities Lyndale Garden Ctrs. Wild Bird Stores (See Yellow Pages)

Beiswenger's Hardware 651-633-1271

The Birdhouse 651-439-1923

The Feed Store 612-473-4283

Hennepin Coop Seed Exchange 612-545-7702

Minnesota Greenery 651-459-3181

Robbinsdale Farm, Garden and Pet 612-533-2244

#### **MAIL ORDER**

MDT and Assoc. 612-529-4355

Gurney's Seed Co. 605-665-1930

#### **OUTSTATE**

Celebrations, Brainerd\* 218-828-0803

Randall Valu Ctr., New Ulm 507-359-9514

Coast to Coast Park Rapids 218-732-4513

\*Ask for silver and colored ribbon

ORIGINAL

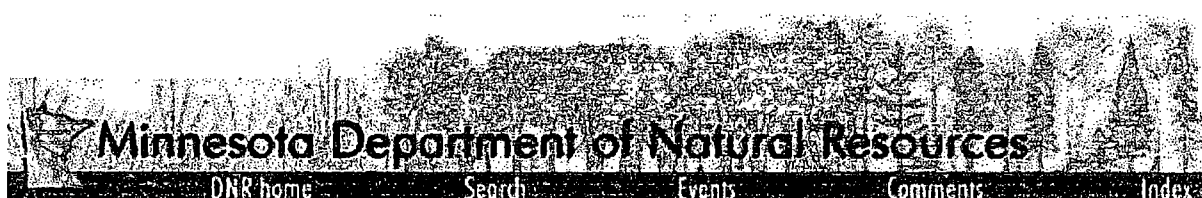
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## Guide to Goose Problems

### LANDSCAPING

**Landscaping your shoreline to make it less attractive for Canada geese and their broods** is considered the most effective long-term and environmentally sound method of reducing goose problems to individual yards and lawns. Canada geese avoid using areas where plants obstruct their view of the surrounding area. Temporary measures such as fences or repellents may be necessary to keep geese from your yard until landscaping is established.

A hedge near the water with a gate to allow access can be decorative as well as effective at reducing goose access to your lawn. The hedge should be 30-36 inches tall and must be thick enough to exclude geese. Check with your local nursery or greenhouse for shrubs that will work in your yard.

Leave a dense strip of naturally occurring trees and shrubs (20-30 feet wide) along the shoreline. A narrow (3-4 feet wide) S-shaped footpath can provide access to the lake. A continuous band of emergent aquatic plants such as cattails or bulrush in the water in front of your shoreline may reduce goose use of your yard.

An unmowed shoreline buffer of native grasses and wild flowers that grow 20-30 inches tall in a strip 20-30 feet wide along the shoreline can discourage goose visits. Native grasses generally remain standing even after winter snows have compacted most other grasses. Use a mowed S-shaped footpath (3-4 feet wide) to provide access from your yard to the shoreline.

A combination of landscaping ideas may be more applicable to your yard. Suggestions for perennial plantings along moist shorelines are available from the DNR publication "Landscaping for Wildlife" available at major bookstores or the Minnesota Bookstore (800-657-3757), or the Hennepin Conservation District's booklet "Aquascaping: A Guide to Shoreline Landscaping" available by sending \$4.44 to Hennepin Conservation District, 10801 Wayzata Blvd. #240, Minnetonka, MN 55305.

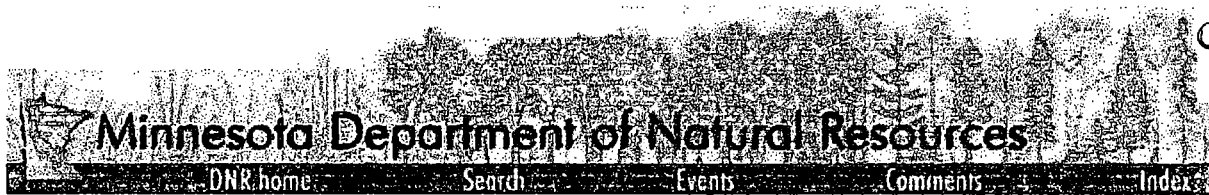
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## Guide to Goose Problems

### ESEPECIALLY FOR GROWER'S

A northward flight of Canada geese or goose broods swimming on a pond are signs of spring Minnesotans welcome. However, the welcome quickly wears thin when geese begin feeding on crops. This guide describes how growers can reduce or eliminate these problems. A combination of the methods, customized for a grower's particular situation, will provide the best results.

#### **Flightless Geese**

Soybeans, sunflowers and small grains planted near wetlands and lakes are attractive to flightless Canada geese. Flightless geese may be goslings which are too young to fly, or molting adults. Newly hatched goslings eat primarily aquatic insects. However, after 3 weeks, goslings become grazers and can move into adjoining crop fields. Action taken before goose damage begins is the most effective. Scout wetlands and lakes adjacent to crop fields for goose broods in late April and May to identify potential problems.

#### **Bird Scare Tape**

#### **Energized Fencing**

#### **Barrier Fencing**

#### **Shoreline Vegetation Management**

Managing shoreline vegetation is an effective and permanent method of reducing goose damage to crops. Canada geese avoid using area where plants block their view and restrict access to the field. Avoid tillage to the wetland or lake edge. Establish grasses that stand 36 inches or taller on a 50-100 foot strip along the shoreline. Suggested grasses include big bluestem, Indiangrass, prairie cordgrass or switchgrass. These grasses general remain standing after the snow has flattened other grasses. You may also establish a shrub belt and leave an unmown grass strip between the water and your crops. Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District or the Natural Resources Conservation Service for details on establishing grasses and shrubs along shorelines. Temporary measures such as fences may be necessary to keep geese from your fields until the vegetation is established.

Some growers may want to consider establishing pasture or hay crops adjacent to lakes or ponds. Although geese may still use these crops, they have a greater ability to recover from goose grazing than other crops. Livestock fencing on pastures can be modified to also exclude geese.

#### **Alternative Feeding Sites**

Alternative feeding or grazing areas can be effective at reducing goose damage when used in conjunction with fencing to keep geese out of target crop areas. Areas planted to small grain

or a freshly mown area of grass less than 6 inches can provide geese an alternative grazing site. Contact your DNR Area Wildlife Office for further information on developing alternative goose feeding sites.

### **Flying Geese**

Swathed grain left on the ground for more than a few days is vulnerable to Canada geese. Occasionally, this is unavoidable due to weather conditions. Flocks of non-breeding or migrating geese are also attracted to newly sprouted grain crops in early spring. Most of the methods discussed here are designed to give the grower short-term protection until the grain may be combined, or to discourage flying geese from feeding on young grain crops until they become established.

### **Hazing**

#### **Flagging/Balloons**

Flags made from 13 gallon white plastic trash bags, or black poly sheeting can be effective at reducing goose damage in swathed grain or young grain crops. The flags flap and rattle in the breeze and frighten geese.

Helium filled balloons with a large contrasting eye spot or "scare eyes" may be staked in a field. Tether balloons with 75-pound test monofilament line and allow them to rise 10 feet above ground.

You will need at least 1 flag or balloon per acre of field. Use flags or balloons in conjunction with automatic propane exploders.

Scare Eye Balloons are available from:

Bird-x, Inc. 800-662-5021

Bird Scare Predator Eye, Inc. 800-252-0933

Reed-Joseph International Co. 800-647-5554

Margo Supplies, Ltd. 403-285-9731

Wildlife Control Technology, Inc. 800-235-0262

#### **Propane Exploders**

Automatic propane exploders work best when used in conjunction with other techniques such as flagging or balloons. Propane exploders make a loud sound that frightens geese. Exploders may be disturbing to human neighbors. Use exploders only when damage is occurring. Use one exploder per 10 acres. Move the exploder to a different location in the field daily. If the exploder has an adjustable timer, change the duration between explosions daily.

Propane Exploders are available from:

Reed-Joseph International 800-647-5554



H.C. Shaw Co. ZON Mark II Scare Gun 800-647-5554

### **Crop Management Practices**

Minimizing the amount of time grain remains on the ground will lower the risk of geese locating the crop. Straight combining and mechanical drying reduces the risks associated with swathing.

### **Emergency Materials Assistance**

The DNR can loan or provide emergency equipment, such as the energized fence materials described in this brochure, to growers experiencing goose damage problems. These materials are available to growers through a Cooperative Damage Management Agreement (CDMA). A CDMA is an agreement between the DNR and the grower to establish a long-term plan to reduce goose damage problems. The CDMA outlines what each party will contribute. Because each grower's situation is different, CDMA's are customized to provide effective solutions to reduce goose damage problems. If you are interested in emergency materials assistance, please contact your local **DNR Area Wildlife Office** for details.

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